

# Culture Abilities Resilience Effort

## *Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gaps*



ENDURING  
UNDERSTANDINGS



STUDENT  
ACTIVITIES



REFLECTIONS



RESOURCES

*C.A.R.E.: Strategies for Closing the  
Achievement Gaps*

*Second Edition*

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing 2.7 million elementary and secondary teachers, education support professionals, college faculty, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.

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# Foreword

Foreword

by Reg Weaver, President, and John I. Wilson, Executive Director  
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Not all students are learning and succeeding in school. This comes as no surprise to educators, to parents, to potential employers, and—most profoundly—to students themselves. The reasons why are as diverse and complex as the students we see in our communities and classrooms each day. So, too, are the reasons why we cannot shake our heads, sit idly by, and hope the problem will correct itself.

From its beginnings, our nation's school system has treated students differently, depending on their race, social class, and gender. Today, despite gains in educational opportunities, significant gaps in academic achievement persist among groups. As a nation, we have struggled to correct the flawed doctrine of "separate but equal" and the inequitable policies and practices that persisted for decades. As educators, we must now understand and interrupt the systematic ways that groups of students are still being treated inequitably today. We must explore new ways of thinking about what and how to teach. This publication—*C.A.R.E.: Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gaps*—will help us do just that.

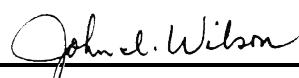
Research-based and developed through the collaborative efforts of teachers, education support professionals, researchers, community advocates, parents, and practitioners, *C.A.R.E.: Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gaps* offers concrete ways to examine and change curriculum and classroom practices. C.A.R.E. stands for culture, abilities, resilience, and effort. As we learn about the cultures that students bring to school, and how to connect these cultures to what students learn, we must also learn about the culture that permeates school and how it advantages or disadvantages certain students. As we learn about the abilities that students possess and how to build on them, we must also learn about what abilities are valued in school and look at alternative ways to assess what students have learned and can do. As we learn about how students are resilient and how to direct that resilience toward academic achievement, we must also learn about how resilience can manifest itself as a rejection of school success and how protective factors differ in different contexts. Finally, we must learn about how students find the motivation to put effort into their studies and discover ways to foster that effort.

As educators working together to make these changes, we are not only advancing our profession, we are advancing the very goals of social justice. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. NEA's commitment to great public schools for every child means that every child will have access to the benefits that a quality education can provide. We envision a society in which individuals are able to develop their full capacities, fully prepared to live in communities with others, and contribute fully to society. The measure of our success is not in the end results such as scores on standardized tests, but in the immeasurable ways that students experience school: how students feel about themselves, interact with others, and prepare for their futures.

We know that closing the gaps to student achievement is a process and a goal. The many contributors to the pages that follow do not pretend to have all the answers, but it is their hope that this publication will continue the discussion. Advancing social justice requires asking very different questions about what and how to teach. *C.A.R.E.: Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gaps* provides concrete examples of how to do just that.



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# Acknowledgments

## Acknowledgments

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